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ABSTRACT

In this lesson, grade 6-8 students analyze a variety of poets and their poetry by reading and listening to their work. Students then use information gathered from Internet resources to select a favorite poet and perform one of their poems for the class. During the four 30-minute and five 20-minute sessions, students will: analyze a variety of poems from a variety of online resources; compare the concrete similarities and differences of several poems; build connections between personal experience and literature; analyze the elements a poet uses to develop meaning; explore and develop an understanding of audience, speaker, narrator, and writer; analyze mood and theme; explore the impact spoken language has on meaning; use dramatic voice and expression; and evaluate their own performance and the performance of others based on a specific evaluation rubric. The instructional plan, lists of resources, student assessment/reflection activities, and a list of National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association (NCTE/IRA) Standards addressed in the lesson are included. A poetry presentation rubric, a WebQuest entitled "In the Poet's Shoes," and Thinking About Poetry Notes are attached. (RS)

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ED 480 632

In the Poet's Shoes: Performing Poetry and Building Meaning

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Grade Band

6-8

Estimated Lesson Time

Four 30-minute sessions to review poetry and complete the analysis; five 20-minute sessions to prepare for the presentation

Overview

Through the use of dramatic reading and the exploration of Internet resources, sixth- through eighth-grade students build a greater understanding of poetry and the poet's voice. Further, the experience requires students to analyze and develop their own interpretation of a poem's meaning and representation through performance. Extension activities involve students giving an oral poetry performance of their own poetry writing.

From Theory to Practice

McMaster, J.C. (1998). "Doing" literature: Using drama to build literacy. *The Reading Teacher, 51,* 574-584.

- Drama is a useful tool in developing affect in readers; it creates interest and motivation.
- Drama provides the opportunity for students to develop fluency through the repeated reading of a text selected for performance.
- Through drama, students develop a deeper understanding of text because it requires them to determine emphasis and interpretation.

Student Objectives

Students will

- Analyze a variety of poems from a variety of online resources
- Compare the concrete similarities and differences of several poems
- Build connections between personal experience and literature
- Analyze the elements a poet uses to develop meaning
- Explore and develop an understanding of audience, speaker, narrator, and writer
- Analyze mood and theme
- Explore the impact spoken language has on meaning
- Use dramatic voice and expression

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- Evaluate their own performance and the performance of others based on a specific evaluation rubric

Resources

- Poetry Presentation rubric
- In the Poet's Shoes WebQuest
- Preparing for Your Performance handout
- Research and Class Participation rubric
- Thinking About Poetry Notes handout
- Thinking About Poetry handout
- Rubistar: Create Rubrics for Your Project-Based-Learning Activities
- "The Red Wheelbarrow" by William Carlos Williams
- *Poetry Out Loud* by Robert A. Rubin. (Algonquin Books, 1996)

Instructional Plan

Preparation

1. Begin by previewing the WebQuest In the Poet's Shoes. Depending on the age and ability of your students, you may want to limit the number of websites or poems that they explore. Worksheets can also be modified to meet your students' abilities.

2. Review the two rubrics provided for evaluation of the students' Poetry Presentation and Research and Class Participation. Consider using the Rubistar website to create an evaluation rubric specific for students' work on the Internet.

3. Prepare several poems on overhead or as handouts to read aloud with your students. *Poetry Out Loud* is an excellent source. You will also need to prepare two overheads of "The Red Wheelbarrow" by William Carlos Williams---one in paragraph form and one in its original poetry form.

Instruction and Activities

1. Begin by displaying a copy of William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow" written out in paragraph form. Have students read the paragraph aloud. Next, explain to students that in poetry each line is a unit of meaning. Tell them that the words a writer uses at the end of each line are specifically chosen to build meaning. Then, display a copy of the same poem in its original form. Again, ask students to read the poem aloud. Discuss how its meaning is affected by the way in which the poem is written.

   Display several poems on an overhead and engage students in a shared reading of the poems. Read them several times in a variety of ways, placing the emphasis on different words and lines within the poem or reading with a variety of loud and soft expressions. Discuss with students how the reading of the poems affects their meaning.

2. Next, have students complete the In the Poet's Shoes WebQuest. Begin by reading the directions together. Explain to students that they will be using the Internet to evaluate a variety of poets and select a favorite poem. At this time, ask students if they have a favorite poem or poet that they

would like to explore. (Note that Shel Silverstein is not included on any of the websites). Encourage students who do not have a favorite poem or poet to ask their parents or grandparents for a suggestion. This is also helpful for students who are overwhelmed by the number of poets at each website. Remind students that although a particular poet may appear on more than one website, they are required to view each poet only once.

3. Have students complete the Thinking About Poetry handout and the Thinking About Poetry Notes handout as they work on the Internet. These handouts are linked directly to the WebQuest for students to print.

4. After students have completed the WebQuest and the two Thinking about Poetry handouts, ask them to submit one copy of the poem that they selected for their performance with a one-paragraph explanation for why they selected that poem (see WebQuest for further directions).

5. Direct students to print a copy of the Preparing for Your Performance handout (also linked to the Webquest). Allow students time in class or for homework to use this handout to prepare for their presentation. As students prepare, give them time in class to rehearse their performance and to work with peers on meaning and interpretation. Also consider having students tape record themselves reading the poem so that they can hear their performance and practice varying tone, voice, and emphasis.

6. Set aside a day for the performance. Set the mood by covering desks with butcher or art paper. Ask students to illustrate their favorite lines of the poem and display their drawings around the room. If possible, invite the students' parents.

Extensions

- Students choose one vocabulary word and illustrate it to show its meaning.
- Students write and perform their own poems for the class.
- Students illustrate lines in a poem to visualize meaning or particular images used in the poem.
- Choose selections from *Poetry Out Loud* to read by stanza in a call-and-response manner. Begin by reading one stanza and having a student respond by reading the next stanza. Continue going back and forth between stanzas. Then, have students write their own poems that can be read in a call-and-response manner.

Student Assessment/Reflections

- Teacher assessment for this lesson will take the form of two evaluation rubrics:

  1. Research and Class Participation rubric

  2. Poetry Presentation rubric

- Use a separate evaluation rubric and an essay response for student's self-assessment. Self-assessment should focus on student's understanding of the poem, his or her interpretation of its meaning, and an evaluation of the performance.

IRA/NCTE Standards

1 - Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

3 - Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

4 - Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

9 - Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

12 - Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

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read•write•think

International Reading Association NCTE marcopolo

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In the Poet's Shoes

Poetry Presentation Rubric

Teacher name: _____

Student name:

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Posture and eye contact	Stands up straight, looks relaxed and confident; establishes eye contact with the audience during the presentation	Stands up straight and establishes eye contact with the audience during the presentation	Sometimes stands up straight and establishes eye contact with the audience during the presentation	Slouches and/or does not look at the audience during the presentation
Preparedness	Completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed	Seems somewhat prepared, but may have needed a couple more rehearsals	Seems somewhat prepared, but it is clear that rehearsal was lacking	Does not seem at all prepared for presentation
Pitch	Pitch was used often to convey emotions appropriately	Pitch was used often, but the emotion it conveyed did not always fit the content	Pitch was rarely used OR the emotion it conveyed often did not fit the content	Pitch was not used to convey emotion
Pauses	Pauses were effectively used two or more times to improve meaning and/or dramatic impact	Pauses were effectively used once to improve meaning and/or dramatic impact	Pauses were intentionally used, but were not effective in improving meaning and/or dramatic impact	Pauses were not intentionally used
Speaks clearly	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (95%-100%) of the time, and does not mispronounce	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (95%-100%) of the time, but mispronounces no more than	Speaks clearly and distinctly most (85%-94%) of the time, but mispronounces	Often mumbles or cannot be understood OR mispronounces more than one word.

	any of the words	one word	no more than one word	
Volume	Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members during the entire presentation	Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members at least 90% of the time	Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members at least 80% of the time	Volume is often too soft to be heard by all audience members
Enthusiasm	Facial expressions and body language generate a strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic	Facial expressions and body language sometimes generate a strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic	Facial expressions and body language are used to try to generate enthusiasm, but seem somewhat faked	Very little use of facial expressions or body language; does not generate much interest in topic
Listens to other presentations	Listens intently; does not make distracting noises or movements	Listens intently, but makes one distracting noise or movement	Sometimes does not appear to be listening, but is not distracting	Sometimes does not appear to be listening, and makes distracting noises or movements

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IN THE POET'S SHOES

Introduction | The Task | Resources | The Process | Searching Advice | Conclusion

Introduction

Welcome adventurers! You are about to "step into the poet's shoes." But, like Cinderella's glass slipper, only one shoe is right for you. To find the right fit, you will be trying on many different shoes--exploring a variety of poets and their poems to find a poet whose writing has special meaning for you. Once you have found your match, you will select a poem, slip into the poet's shoes, and perform your poem for the class.

The Task

During this activity, you will select a favorite poem and gather ideas for presenting that poem to the class. You will have the opportunity to listen to famous poets read their work, as well as to visit some more modern poetry "slams" and festivals. It is up to you to decide the best method for performing your poem for the class.

Once you have completed your research, you will be using the Thinking About Poetry handout, the Thinking About Poetry Notes handout, the links at the bottom of the Resources list, and the Preparing for Your Performance handout to help you prepare for your performance.

Resources

Poetry Links

Use the following links to research various poets and their poetry.

- The Academy of American Poets: http://www.poets.org/poets/index.cfm
- Poets' Corner: http://www.theotherpages.org/poems/
- Fooling With Words with Bill Moyers: http://www.pbs.org/wnet/foolingwithwords/main_poet.html
- Spotlight on Voices & Visions: http://www.learner.org/catalog/extras/vvspot/index.html (Listen to poets read their poems and follow links to find out more about the poet and their ideas.)

- The Atlantic Online Poetry Pages: http://www.theatlantic.com/unbound/poetry/ (Click on a link to read or listen to the poem.)
- The Internet Poetry Archive: http://www.ibiblio.org/ipa/ (Click on a poet to bring you to their page, then click on a link to select a poem and click on the title to hear it read.)

Presentation Links

To prepare for your presentation, use the following links.

- How to Read a Poem Out Loud: http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/
- Favorite Poem Project: http://www.favoritepoem.org/ (Click on the videos to view people reading their favorite poems. Note that the people at this site **are not** the authors of the poems they read.)

The Process

1. Begin by printing out the Thinking About Poetry handout and taking out a pen or pencil. Be sure your name is on the handout.
2. Print out a copy of the Thinking About Poetry Notes. You will be using this form to record bibliographic information and take notes as you visit each website.
3. You must visit at least four of the Poetry Links listed in Resources. At each website select **two** poets and read and listen to several of their poems.
4. As you read and listen to the poems, use the questions on your Thinking About Poetry handout to complete your chart.
5. Once you have explored at least four different websites, use the questions at the bottom of your handout to evaluate the poets' styles and make some choices about your performance.
6. Select your favorite poet and one of his or her poems to use for your performance. All poems must be submitted to and approved by the teacher, and each student must perform a different poem so make sure that you have a back-up poem bookmarked.
7. Copy and paste your selection into Microsoft Word. Save your poem by the name of the poet and the title of the poem.
8. Print out two copies of the poem.

Once you have selected and printed your poem, submit one copy of the poem to the teacher for approval, along with a paragraph explaining your reasons for selecting that poem. Include in your explanation what message you believe the poet is trying to express to the audience and what **you** think the poem means. Upon receiving the teacher's approval, you will have 1 week to prepare for your presentation. You are not expected to memorize

the poem; however, you should be able to present your poem using eye contact and appropriate expression.

Searching Advice

Take your time and read all the directions or information on a particular page. Be patient, some of the readings may take a little while to load. While you are waiting, answer the questions at the bottom on your Thinking About Poetry handout to make the best use of your time.

Conclusion

Congratulations! You've found the right fit and now you're ready to successfully step into the poet's shoes. Be sure to use the Preparing for Your Performance handout to help you get ready for your presentation!

This page was adapted from Bernie Dodge's WebQuest template by Beth O'Connor.

Name: _____

Preparing for Your Performance

Now that you have finished your WebQuest, in addition to learning the words of the poem, you must consider how your poem will be presented. You will be expected to perform your poem in the manner that best represents its meaning. It is important to think about the speaker (i.e., the narrator of the poem) as well as the audience.

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper to help prepare for your presentation.

1. Who is the speaker?

What does the poem reveal about the personality of the speaker (or narrator) of the poem? How old is the speaker, what experiences do you think they have had (or are having) based on the poem you selected? Every poem tells a story, and just as in fiction, a writer will reveal the personality of the speaker of the poem through actions or feelings. Determining the speaker of the poem and where he or she is coming from will help you determine how the poem can be performed.

2. Is the speaker addressing a particular person?

How can you tell? If the speaker is addressing a particular person, who is it? Why is the speaker of the poem interested in this person? Sometimes a poem is addressed to a particular person, and sometimes it is for no one specifically, so it relates to everyone (think about songs and song lyrics). Understanding whom the poem is addressing helps you to think about how the poem could be performed. Is it a child talking to a parent, friend to friend, husband to wife? What emotional state does the speaker present (angry, sad, or joyful)?

3. Does the poem have a setting?

What is the setting? Is it in the present or the past, an urban or a rural area? How will the setting affect your performance (language)?

4. From what perspective (or point of view) is the speaker describing specific events?

In your poem, does the speaker recall events that have happened in the past and reflect on them, or are they events that are happening in the speaker's life at the present? What meaning do the events have for the speaker?

5. What was your response to the poem on first reading?

Sometimes your first reaction to the poem best captures the emotional response the writer intended. Did the poem make you angry, sad, or happy? What specific words did you read that contributed to these feelings? What in your own experience related to the experience of the speaker in the poem?

In the Poet's Shoes

Research and Class Participation Rubric

Teacher name: _____

Student name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Follows directions	Has an excellent understanding of the project and its requirements; follows directions thoroughly and completely	Understands and follows all directions	Understands most directions and attempts to follow them	Doesn't follow directions
Works independently	Remains on task without reminders; works quietly and efficiently using notes and textbooks	Works quietly on assignment, asking questions when necessary	Quiet, daydreaming; eventually may get to work on assignment	Distracts others; talks to others instead of working; teacher must remind student about getting to work
Initiative	Volunteers to answer and ask questions; helps others in class; knows what needs to be done and does it	Participates when asked; begins to work when assignment given; works hard most of the time	Rarely participates; starts work when reminded; seldom asks for help	Has difficulty starting to work; doesn't ask for help; doesn't get caught up after absence; doesn't participate
Homework and work habits	Completes homework and assignments; checks answers and makes corrections	Usually completes homework and assignments; does not always check and correct answers	Completes some assignments and homework; checks answers occasionally	Completes only a few assignments and homework; does not check answers
Organization	Notebook is organized and complete; uses the agenda to record all homework, assignments, and important dates	Notebook is fairly complete but needs some organization; uses the agenda most of the time	Does not have notes and work up to date; notes are not in order; has agenda but rarely uses it	Does not bring notebook, textbook, pencils, paper
Teamwork	Demonstrates cooperation, respect, and leadership	Cooperative; participates and follows the lead of others	Does little to participate; lets others do the work	Interrupts, distracts, or disrupts others; difficult to work with

http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson78/researchrubric.html

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Name: _____

Thinking About Poetry Notes

Use the following chart to help you organize your thoughts as you answer the seven questions from the "Thinking About Poetry" handout. Remember, you must explore at least four websites and two poets per site.

Website #1: _____

	Poet #1	**Poet #2**
Poet's name		
Poem read		
Question 1		
Question 2		
Question 3		
Question 4		
Question 5		
Question 6		
Question 7		

Website #2: _____

	Poet #1	**Poet #2**
Poet's name		
Poem read		
Question 1		
Question 2		
Question 3		
Question 4		
Question 5		
Question 6		
Question 7		

Website #3: _____

	Poet #1	Poet #2
Poet's name		
Poem read		
Question 1		
Question 2		
Question 3		
Question 4		
Question 5		
Question 6		
Question 7		

Website #4: _____

	Poet #1	Poet #2
Poet's name		
Poem read		
Question 1		
Question 2		
Question 3		
Question 4		
Question 5		
Question 6		
Question 7		

Name: _____

THINKING ABOUT POETRY

1. What is the URL of the website you are viewing? Write the URL on the line for Website.
2. What two poets are you viewing? Write the poets' names on your chart
3. Write the name of the poem you are viewing for each poet.

Read or listen to a poem or several poems from both poets, and then fill in the chart by answering the following questions for one poem written by each poet.

1. What is the overall emotional feeling (mood) of this poem? What words or emphasis of words did the author use to cause you to believe this?
2. What does this poem make you think about? Does it relate to any experience you have ever had? Explain.
3. If the author read a poem aloud that you read to yourself, how did the meaning of the poem change for you having heard it as the author thought it should sound?
4. What surprised you about this poem?
5. What surprised you when you heard this poem aloud?
6. What two things do you like about this poem, or what two things do you dislike about this poem? Explain why you reacted this way.
7. Explain one unusual thing about the way this poem was written or read.

Once you have completed your chart and have viewed eight poets, answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Write the name and author of two poems that you liked. What two things do these poems have in common?

_____

_____

_____

2. Write the name and author of two poems that you did not like. What two things do these poems have in common?

_____

_____

_____

3. Write the name of two poems to which you listened. How did the way in which the poet read the poem help to express its meaning? Give two specific examples.

4. Explain why listening was different from reading the poem. Give two examples.

5. Give at least two examples of things you can do when you read aloud that you cannot do when you read silently.

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